

THE MUGELNOOS

No. 635 -- November 19, 1985. An 8 page issue.

A newsheet published by and for the Ski Mountaineers and Rock Climbing Sections of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions & address changes to Dove Menkes, 2530 Coventry Cir., Fullerton 92633. \$7 (not cash) due in October.

#### NOW WHAT?

The letter sent last week to all Mugelnoos subscribers explained the crisis now facing climbers in the Sierra Club because of new insurance restrictions. The RCS Management Committee, augmented by other volunteers from the Section, has met twice and done some research into alternative actions. They are currently contacting insurance brokers and companies. It is hoped that with the aid of a waiver and a memorandum describing court cases in which waivers have been upheld in claims involving accidents in adventure sports (being prepared for the RCS by Randy Vogel), we can find an insurer either to cover us within the Sierra Club or to cover a separate climbing club. The Sierra Club is also being urged to try harder to find insurance. This issue of the Mugelnoos contains a suggested letter to Michele Perrault, President of the Club. Please write to her and/or to other board members, making the points mentioned in the letter, plus whatever else you wish to say.

If anyone has any leads to possible insurers, please call Michael Feldman, (213) 462-0606.

There will be an emergency RCS Business Meeting on Tuesday, December 17 (Mugelnoos evening), at the Griffith Park Ranger Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles, at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is urged to attend.

RCS Management Committee

#### BALDY HUT READY -- ARE YOU . . . ?

At least fifteen people showed up at the latest San Antonio Ski Hut work party, held Oct 5-6. Last July the Hut was vandalized, suffering extensive glass damage. Most of this was repaired immediately, but there were still a few pieces to be added in Oct, plus some general sprucing up. Stocking the cellar with wood for the upcoming (hopefully heavy) winter was the main chore. The Alpine Ski Touring Committee (ASTC) turned out in force to accomplish this task with a vengeance. If the snow gods take note of such efforts, then this promises to be a very good ski year at Baldy Bowl. John Wedberg, chairman of the ASTC notes that his group has scheduled six trips to the hut in '86 and makes the hike himself, snow or not, every Sat morning, Nov thru Mar. (Wedberg and R.J.Secor will host a SMS trip there Feb 1-2). Skiers are extended an open invitation by John to join him and the ASTC any Sat for a glorious, well earned run down "West Ridge Bowl", "3-Pin Alley", or "The Dare", if you dare. (See writeup in front of Angeles Chpt Sched under Ski Mountaineers entitled "Ski Baldy")

With the ship in shape again, the San Antonio Ski Hut Management Committee extends their hospitality and invites everyone up for a day or weekend of solitude in our local "High Country Hutte". (There's usually room for hikers too). We're ready . . . are you? (JP)

MUGELNOOS STAFF

EDITOR for November . . . . . Margo Koss  
 MUGELGRAPHER . . . . . LeRoy Russ  
 MUGELMAILER . . . . . Dove Menkes  
 REPORTERS: Tony Bird, Bob Brinton, Maris  
 Valkass, Al Carlson, Margo Koss, Don Pies,  
 Jim Powers, Alois Smrz.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT for Mugelnoos subscribers who have not renewed for next year! Send \$7 to Dove Menkes (no cash, please), 2530 Coventry Circle, Fullerton, CA 92633.

NEXT EDITOR: John Wedberg  
 1374 Stradella Rd.  
 Los Angeles, CA 90042  
 213 472-6768

NEXT ISSUE: December 17, 1985

DEADLINE: Wednesday, December 11

MUGELNOOS MEETINGS: Third Tues. of each month, 7:30 p.m., Griffith Park Ranger Auditorium, 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles. On the night of the December Mugelnoos meeting, December 17, the RCS will hold an emergency Business Meeting to decide among alternative solutions to the insurance problem. Everyone is urged to attend.

C A L E N D A R

Ski Mountaineers

Dec 14 Leader Training, Pies/Holleman

Dec 21 Ski Bagging, Frazier Park,  
 Danta/Mantle

Rock Climbing Section

ALL RCS TRIPS ARE CANCELLED PENDING  
 RESOLUTION OF THE INSURANCE PROBLEM  
 WITH THE SIERRA CLUB.

ADS AND NOTICES

Lost. The wired chocks left on the table at Big Rock on October 27 belong to Dove Menkes. Please contact by mail (out of town in Nov.).

For Sale. REI DENALI expedition down bag (-30F), used just once, near new cond., new was \$345, will sell \$140. REI KENAI down bag (+15F), 4lb., excellent condition, new \$150, will sell \$60. JONES down parka, large, duck down, blue, \$20. FORREST/REI Mountaineer ice axe, 70 cm, \$15. INTERALP Annapurna ice axe, 80 cm, \$10. FORREST expedition overboots, size 9½-11½, near new, \$35. SALEWA hinged crampons with neoprene straps, \$15. EDDY BAUER/JANSPORT D3 frame pack, \$20. If interested, call Alois Smrz, (213) 823-8628, after 5:00 p.m.

Wanted. Used alpine gear, especially Ramer bindings. John Wedberg, (213) 472-6768.

For Sale. One pair PHOENIX CLASSIC skis, 200 cm, with ASOLO bindings. Used about six times. \$145. Call Kathy Johnson at (213) 393-9420 during the day or (213) 454-1855 during the evening.

Tredecophilia Party. Site 5 at Sheep's Pass has been reserved for a weekend-long Friday the 13th party. All are welcome. The reservation is in the name "A. Korbut" in case you arrive early and the Joshua Tree rangers need to know.

For Sale. FIRES, size 11, used twice (too small), \$35. Bob Caswell, (714) 528-3531.

ADS AND NOTICES, cont'd.

Thanksgiving Potluck. Site 7 at Indian Cove will be the site of a potluck turkey feast hosted by Dick Mundwiler, with LeRoy and Margo providing the turkey and everyone else bringing their favorite goodies. The feast will be held on Saturday night, November 30. All are welcome.

RCS COURSE POSTPONED

Because of the insurance problem with the Sierra Club, the RCS rock climbing training course has been postponed until February, in the hope that we can resolve the problems by that time. All enrollees have been offered refunds.

NEW PROFICIENCY RATINGS

RCS proficiency ratings have been earned by the following (addresses and telephone numbers will be published in the new rosters): Kelly Edwards, Steve Wendell, Bob Costantini, John Eels, Donna O'Shaughnessy, Kathleen Hill, Pete Saggau, Mary Jane Caswell, Windflower Ochoa, Catherine Rohweller, Michael Meyer, Jack Knox, Rick LeDuc, Mark Sirota, Liz Gibson, Michael Mihalka, Michael Stephenson, Frank Avella, Gary Hall.

(Sorry it took so long for announcement to appear for some of you!)

SMS LEADER TRAINING: DECEMBER 14

The SMS desperately needs new trip leaders. SMS leader certification is granted at the discretion of the Central Committee. A person can then lead up to the level of trip that the leader has previously been rated for by the Angeles Chapter.

A workshop will be conducted on Saturday, December 14, to cover topics related to leading ski mountaineering trips. All existing leaders and potential leaders are encouraged to attend. In addition to general topics of interest, we are trying to coordinate this to be a joint workshop with the Southern California Nordic Ski Patrol. Send SASE to Don Pies, 1606 Haynes Ln., Redondo Beach, CA 90278, (213) 318-6251.

Pray to the gods for early local snow. pp  
BAD TIMES IN EUROPE

In 1984, 166 persons died while climbing in Switzerland. In the two months of July and August 1985, Mt. Blanc alone claimed 117 wounded and 29 killed. According to an article in an American/German newspaper, last year was the worst year ever recorded for mountaineering deaths in Europe. (Interestingly, 9 of the 166 killed in Switzerland were killed while picking flowers.) Al Carlson

. . . AND FROM THE CHINA DAILY  
NEWSPAPER OF AUGUST 9, 1985:

Lhasa, Tibet. Increasing numbers of foreign mountaineers are taking up the challenge of Tibet's mountains. All Tibet's peaks have been open to foreign climbers since the beginning of this year. Four hundred came in the first six months alone.

In 1984, 1200 climbers in 94 teams came to Tibet. This year over 1000 mountaineers are expected again. By 1990 Li Fa, head of the regional sports commission, hopes that the region will handle 10,000 climbers annually.

WALTER HENNIES

On September 29th Walter Hennies died from a heart attack suffered on the trail to the Hörnli Hut on the Matterhorn. Efforts to revive him both by his hiking companion and a French doctor proved to be futile, and his body was evacuated by helicopter. Walter is survived by his only close relative, son Walter Dean Hennies, a graduate student at Stanford University.

A memorial service for Walter was held in Santa Barbara on October 19th. Remembrances can be made in his name to the Sansum Medical Research Foundation, 2219 Bath Street, Santa Barbara, Ca.

Walter and Helen, his late wife, were very active in the early activities of both the RCS and SMS. He contributed generously with many days' labor to building the San Antonio and Keller Peak Ski Huts.

Bob Brinton

Sample letter to Sierra Club President protesting insurance position:

Michele Perrault  
President, Sierra Club  
530 Bush Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108

Re: Outings restrictions resulting  
from new insurance

Dear Michele:

I wish to express my concern that the new policy as outlined in your memorandum of November 1 is harmful to all outings activity and may adversely affect the future of the Sierra Club.

The outings activities of the Sierra Club have long been an important part of the Club's identity. The demise or reduction of outings would reduce the membership by failure to attract new members, most of whom are initially drawn by the activities, and by loss of some current members.

In mountaineering and water activities, the restrictions will limit training of leaders, with the result that Club outings leaders will be less well prepared to assess dangers and respond to emergencies. The restrictions will also limit training of participants, resulting in a lower overall skill level and a higher probability of accidents. Reduction of training programs will also adversely affect recruitment of new members.

We fear that the issues that led to the restrictions on mountaineering and water sports may also in the future lead to restrictions on other outings activities.

We hope that the Club will make every effort to find insurance coverage that will cover all of the Club outings.

Sincerely yours,

## AUTUMN IN CANADIAN ROCKIES

He who waits long at the ferry .....  
will get across sometime .....

Rocky Mountains Canada North, Page 336

Well, this was a second waiting but the ferry didn't go. The locals swore up and down that we just missed it by a week, that there really was a superb summer in the Rockies and that the only thing that didn't happen, was the Indian Summer. No kidding .....

Miguel Rodriguez and I arrived for a two week trip on September 14th full of energy and plans, also vengeance on my part (for a wasted week at Mt. Robson last year). We raced through Calgary and up toward Columbia Icefields where we arrived with just enough spare light to sort our gear, set up our packs, watch a beautiful sunset and hit the sacs. The 2:00 AM sky was clear and full of stars so off we were toward the North Face of Mt. Athabasca. The glacier (about 1500 ft gain) was difficult as approximately 2 ft of snow were already on the ground. It took us about 3 1/2 hrs to reach the base of the climb. There the sky closed in, and soon we were climbing in a real blizzard. The face is about 600 meters (1800 ft) of 60° ice with some 5.5 mixed climbing through a rock band high on the face. We climbed simultaneously, placing 1 or 2 screws for running belays. By the time we reached the mid portion of the face, wind and driven snow made climbing so difficult that normally we would - run - down, but we only had 6 screws and it looked worse going down than up .... Miguel gave me the lead about 3 pitches below the rock band. The band was really exciting and well protected (fixed pins) mixed lead. While cleaning the mixed pitch, Miguel severely damaged his brand new Chouinard Zero X tool, the pick of the axe actually bent 90°. We finished the climb with Miguel climbing the 60° ice gully with Chouinard Alpine Hammer as his only usable tool. It made for difficult and time consuming climbing. We spent 15 hrs on the climb, partly due to the horrible weather and partly because we didn't carry spare tool and Miguel had to do without "Piolet Traction" for a while. Mt. Athabasca was the only thing we climbed. We aborted Mt. Robson attempt due to weather, also Mt. Andromeda. Later attempt to reach Mt. Fay failed too. In the next 5 days winter took over in the Canadian Rockies and we had to be content just to day hike to various trail heads (for future reference). Miguel also honed his sales techniques in Jasper, where he managed to swap 2 Titanium screws and some money for a brand new Grivel Ice Axe. However, the weather never broke and we didn't climb anymore. For anyone contemplating a trip to these fantastic mountains, be on notice that nobody within 200 miles carries any spare parts for Chouinard or Lowe Ice Tools, carry spares or you might be in for a lesson.

After 7 days, soaked and unhappy we had enough and flew home. I hear that the Rockies will be there next year....  
but will the Ferry show up .....

Alois Smrz

YOSEMITE VALLEY, OCTOBER 12-14

Twenty-one climbers luxuriated in the beautiful weather of a perfect fall weekend in the Valley. The shade did come a bit early on the Apron, and there were a few cool breezes here and there, but people had fun on some good climbs. Al Sanderson and Al Vysin climbed the North Buttress of Middle Cathedral. Fortified with Tips from a Yosemite Veteran, Don Pies, LeRoy Russ and Paul Harris pioneered the Spiral Variation of the Regular Route on Higher Cathedral Spire ("just keep going to the right, LeRoy"). Claude and Ann Lane, who went up earlier in the week, fled before we arrived, leaving only a few hundred giant rain puddles in their wake. Ah, fate! One mysterious note: Dick DeRusha and LeRoy, according to the sign-in sheet, climbed the Royal Arches in 1 minute flat, but wrote "no comment" in the Remarks column???

Margo Koss

BOULDER-BIRDS

The acquisition of another climber in the family has made for a temporary curtailment in major climbing projects (for reasons upon which we won't elaborate, we will disclose that Erika narrowly missed being named Half Dome). So, against the day when my daughter will lead me over those big walls I couldn't do this year, I've discovered the sport of bouldering, which, I understand, has been there all along.

What I'd like to report are a couple of bouldering jewels. One is Mugu Rock, the only rock on the left side of Pacific Coast Highway as you approach Point Mugu. I see that appearances prompted a recent RCS party to turn down this excellent opportunity for a workout. They probably weren't into jamcrack climbing. The attraction here is not the main Mugu Rock, which is generally crumbly and hazardous, but the 25-foot-high boulder at the east end of the parking area. This little gem has a vertical face with half a dozen cracks ranging from 5.8 to 5.11, some 5.11 face, and a helluva ground-level traverse. There is ample "crackage" at top to top rope it if you must and, I gotta tell ya, there is no place in southern California with this many cruxy cracks this close to each other.

The main rock has a nice-looking quarter-pitch face (Dan Dunkle reports it at 5.9.; I haven't tried it, since Mariko can't do a bumper belay and mind Erika at that location), but there's not much else worth looking into, unless you're into testing the crumbleability of bad rock 75 feet off the ground. But the ocean view is great, and it's never too hot here. If you're making a day of it, stop at Zuma Beach and investigate the bolted face at the east end of the beach. Let me know what it's like.

Meanwhile, back in the San Gabriels, a new bouldering area has recently come to our attention. Thanks go to Dunkle for this one: he found it mentioned in the annual Guide to L.A. edition of LA Weekly, which devoted a full page (!) to rock climbing. There was a rundown on our usual haunts, plus something called Horse Flat Campground.

Horse Flat Campground is a little past the Chilao area and a couple of miles down the paved part of the eastern approach road to Mt. Pacifico, off Angeles Crest Highway. We had to hike in the half mile to the campground because the gate is closed after peak season, but it was a lovely day in a lovely area, and the boulders are delectable, high quality granite, some of them thirty feet high. I did a nice face route, tried a hard finger crack, managed a somewhat tricky water chute, got pumped on some less-than-bombproof palm holds up a very sheer face, investigated a short bolt route and got a view of a 50-foot giant a ways up the hill which we didn't quite have time for that day. All in all, an extremely pleasant place. Perhaps it might be a candidate for a slightly earlier annual picnic (it was cool and hinting at winter in early October), and perhaps a replacement for Mt. Pacifico, which still has a lousy road at the summit, as a proficiency test site.

Tony Bird

## JOSHUA TREE, APRIL 13-14

Now that it's almost Joshua Tree time again, I remembered that I had never written up this April trip, despite its remarkable features. Several young people from the Inner City Outings program were given a weekend of climbing by a group of RCSers; feedback via the Sierra Club office indicated that they had a great time. Greg Vernon and Dan Dunkle, climbing a collection of 5.10s with various letters of the alphabet appended, and John Orange, "on a roll," were the most energetic, but several recently-graduated students did a lot of good climbing, too. The heat drove some of us in search of the reputed "pools" in Rattlesnake Canyon. Skinny dipping in green slime? The wonders of camouflaged frogs and John Orange's diving style?

Margo Koss

POOPOUT ON PITON POOPER

Since this weekend was one of my few "free" weekends, I decided to finish the summer climbing season by doing a multi pitch route on Tahquitz. I invited Jim Farkas to be my partner, and we left for our climb early Saturday morning (October 5).

Initially I had planned to climb the Swallow, but Andre told me earlier that it is a formidable climb. This was further confirmed by Emory Yount and John Moore whom we met at the roadhead. So we opted to do the Jam Crack.

The climb was very enjoyable and we completed the route on the pine tree ledge on the Trough. Instead of following the Trough to the top, I decided to finish it via the Piton Pooper.

The route looked pretty straight forward. I got to the fixed pin without too much difficulty. After that it looked like with some lieback and stemming I should make it. However, the lieback turned out to be quite strenuous, and my stemming did not work out as planned. I was at the top and needed only a couple of inch pounds of strength to pull myself up, but I never got them. It was a fast 40' down. On the way down I must have hit the little tree or a protruding rock which broke my ankle. Jim held the fall real well, I came to rest upside down with my Budrier chest harness taking the full brunt. The knot really dug into my ribs. I don't recall if I banged my head, but I was wearing my helmet so there was no damage anyway.

After gathering our wits, it became obvious that I could not get down the rock safely and less painfully without outside help. Fortunately, a couple from San Diego RCS, just came up another route and offered to go for help. They left us with some extra clothing and water, just in case we had to wait till morning. We estimated that it would take about two hours till the authorities (sheriff) were notified, then a couple of hours to get the rescue party together, but by that time it would be too dark. So we settled in for the long wait till morning. The weather was warm, the sky cloudy and with lightning. There was also a big party going on in one of the houses complete with a live band. If it was not for the pain in my leg, it would have been a very pleasant night.

Before it became completely dark, a helicopter showed up flying fairly close to the rock and obviously looking at us. Then it flew up near the top of the rock and remained out of sight and flew away. This happened about three times before it finally left. By that time it became clear that people and equipment were being flown to the top for the morning rescue.

An hour later we heard someone yelling for us. Cameron, of the Riverside Search and Rescue, was rapping down to us. A few minutes later, Bill, the doctor, was coming down and checked me over. Then Rob and another man (whose name I didn't get) and finally Walt Walker, the president of the organization came. They all brought equipment, extra clothing, food, water etc.

The original plan was to haul me up to the top and fly off. But since the weather was changing, they did not want to fly that night nor did they know if the weather was going to be good in the morning. Staying on the rock till morning also was not desirable because of the lightning. So the decision was to lower me all the way down. They had a 600' rope. It took about two hours of planning and setting up. All plans and actions were discussed with the home base via radio. Everything was double checked and talked over. The lowering went without a hitch. Everyone else rapped off and we all spent the night at the base of the Jam crack.

Next morning (it was raining but stopped long enough) they still had to lower me about 100' to the talus and from there I had to be carried to Lunch Rock, to be picked up by the helicopter (or rappel fashion lowered down the trail on Stokes litter with a wheel). The last 100' were the most difficult due to the thick bushes and trees. All of us were flown out from Lunch Rock to the fire station in Idylwild. Emory Yount was waiting for us there too. Someone drove Jim back to the parking lot to get his car, and then we were on our way home.

POOPOUT, continued from Page Six

The whole operation was conducted in an efficient professional and friendly manner. The Winston Cigarette ad aptly describes it.

There is no charge for the Riverside Search and Rescue service. There may be a charge for the helicopter depending where one lives. They told me that LA County, where I live, picks up the tab.

I would like to recommend that RCS consider making a yearly donation such as \$50, to the Riverside Search and Rescue service. Most of our climbs are at Tahquitz, Suicide and Joshua Tree, where we are more likely to use their services.

Considering this climb from a safety standpoint, I think that if I had placed one or two pieces of protection between the fixed pin and the top, I may not have sustained a broken ankle.

Maris Valkass


## Randonnée Skiing

**O**n steep, icy snow, skiing on telemark equipment can be like driving fast in a '55 Ford. The challenge is more in controlling the rig than in pushing the limits of the skill. And on hot spring afternoons, when the bottom falls out of the crust, skinny skis cease to float and the three-pin system invites silent prayer.

Randonnée is the logical alternative: it is a more pleasurable way to tour the backcountry in these conditions, and it is safer as well. The shorter, wider design of Alpine-touring skis allows quicker turning, more downhill control, and much better flotation, especially under the load of a heavy pack. A wider ski accommodates wider skins; with the extra traction you can climb steeper slopes. Locked-heel releasable bindings allow you to shed your skis in the event of an avalanche and reduce the chance of leg injuries.

The timing is right for telemark and alpine skiers to learn randonnée—the new gear is much lighter and less cumbersome than that of the past. The skis are now lighter than some telemark skis. The boots are more comfortable for touring. New bindings hold the boot closer to the ski, are simpler to operate, and are now as safe as alpine release bindings.

Ski aficionados who have discovered randonnée for their off-piste mountain trips are delighting in smooth, flowing turns—in a myriad of snow conditions—in remote terrain, miles away from any ski lift. Randonnée skiing presents a new challenge to telemarker and downhiller alike: both can transcend the limitations of their familiar technique. Randonnée gear on the slopes is a true sign that the ski renaissance is upon us.



From Chouinard's new  
Winter catalog.

RCS ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual meeting, held October 28, brought mostly "good news" (the bad news came the week after). The RCS grew to 93 members (86 regular, 7 honorary) from 88, and has 159 proficiency rating holders compared to 113 the year before. There were no accidents last year. The Mugelnoos treasury is well in the black, and the RCS has slightly over \$2000. The City is proceeding with acquisition of the remaining piece of Stoney Point (Boulder 1). More women than men have applied for this year's course.

Bob Camps was nominated by unanimous vote of those present for honorary membership (ballots will be sent to the members).

Those present voted to retain Stan Klein, John Hodgman, Mindy Bagdon, David Burdett, Hans Lees, and Fred Wing.

New officers elected were John Orange, Chair, and Phil Rabichow, Vice-Chair. Bob Caswell, in a remarkable show of endurance and dedication, continues as Secretary-Treasurer.

Speaking of endurance and dedication, the Hell on High Mountain award went to John Orange, whose 38 climbing days left everyone else far behind. And "far behind" leads us to the next award: Steve Dawson and Tom Jenkins were voted the E.B. Twinkletoes award for their Mt. Whitney ascent. They started up the East Face behind a party of 14, got off route, and finished far behind the 14. Virgil Shields nominated them for the award. The C.Y. Rocksoff award went to Margo Koss (to be shared with her little brother Bill Percival), for a climb of Fairview Dome in the rain followed by a sort of "rescue" of Bob Somoano and Claude Lane (they didn't really need it, but saving them one extra rappel seemed the comradely thing to do, since they had already done four or so in a cold downpour).

Will there be an Annual Meeting next year? Renew your subscription to Mugelnoos and catch the upcoming episodes in the insurance saga!

Margo Koss

THE MUGELNOOS  
Dove Menkes  
2530 Coventry Circle  
Fullerton, CA 92633

